

Herd Behavior in Assessments of Web Interface Design: Some Preliminary Evidence

Emergent Research Forum Paper

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Abstract

This paper reports on the preliminary findings of a large study aimed at investigating the role of herding in assessments of web interface design. In the context of human behavior, herding occurs when a human being unconsciously bases his or her decisions on the actions or opinions of others. Using a controlled, randomized experiment involving 678 subjects, three different web interfaces, and five different interface design characteristics, the preliminary findings indicate that herd behavior exerts a strong and highly significant influence on web interface design assessments. The effect is particularly pronounced when subjects are provided with experimentally manipulated interface design ratings from people whom the subjects believe to be very similar to themselves. Since websites commonly serve as the public face of modern organizations, these findings have obvious and important implications insofar as web design influences how an organization is perceived and its subsequent prospects for success.

Keywords

Herd behavior, web interface design, interface evaluation